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FM AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1333
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2641
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1019
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3032
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2417
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 000911

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR MEETS WITH TURKISH COUNTERPART

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Classified By: Ambassador Tatiana Gfoeller for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: On September 8, Ambassador made an introductory call on Serpil Alpman, Turkey's Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic. The envoys discussed a range of issues, including which embassy would serve as the next NATO Contact Point Embassy, Kyrgyz government pressure against foreign universities, and interest in greater coordination among the diplomatic community in Bishkek. End summary.

12. (C) Ambassador met September 8 with Serpil Alpman, Turkey's Ambassador in Bishkek. The Ambassadors discussed which Embassy might serve as the NATO Contact Point Embassy for the 2009-2010 rotation. Alpman explained that Turkey had served as the Contact Point Embassy for the last two rotations and was ready to pass the responsibility to another NATO-member embassy in Bishkek. Ambassador said that the U.S. Embassy would not be a good choice at the present time. She explained that the presence of Manas Coalition Air Base gives rise to black press and suspicion about U.S. intentions in Kyrgyzstan, and having the U.S. Embassy serve as the NATO representative would add to those suspicions, which could adversely affect the Base. The Ambassadors suggested that either the French or German Embassy might consider serving as NATO representative, and Alpman said she would ask NATO about the possibility of the French permanent Charge d'Affaires filling the void.

13. (C) The Ambassadors also discussed the problems faced by the Kyrgyzstan-Turkey Manas University and the American University of Central Asia (AUCA) as a result of government pressure. Ambassador noted that AUCA has a long-term agreement to use two historic buildings in central Bishkek, but the government is pushing AUCA to give up those buildings and move to another location. Alpman said that Bishkek City mayor Nariman Tuleyev is pressuring the Turks to pull out of Manas University as well, and she speculated that the administration may be trying to "get rid of the university and sell the land." Alpman expressed her frustration with the administration, claiming that the Turkish government, having already invested over \$100 million, was looking to

expand the university's capacity.

¶4. (C) Ambassador asked what actions should be taken to protect the universities. Alpman stated that the Turkish embassy had already delivered letters, notes, and demarches demanding that the city administration back off. She believed that Deputy Prime Minister Elmira Ibraimova, responsible for education and social issues, could be an ally to reach President Bakiyev, and Alpman said that she considered State Secretary Dosbol Nur uulu to be another ally.

¶5. (C) Alpman explained the two-pronged approach to Turkish-Kyrgyz relations by supporting education and investment projects. She said that in addition to funding Manas University, the Turkish government supported other education establishments, such as the theological department at Osh State University, a vocational school for girls, and a high school for gifted students. Alpman expressed her concern about the growing prominence of Fetullah Gulen-funded high schools in Kyrgyzstan (she noted that Gulen is a devout Turk who has run afoul of the Turkish government in the past for his intense religious views). Alpman said that these private schools are growing in popularity because most of the instruction is in English but that the ultra-conservative message may have a negative impact on Kyrgyz youth. Alpman added that her government promoted investment opportunities in Kyrgyzstan for Turkish businesses. She said that several Turkish companies successfully operate in the free trade zones near Bishkek, producing items such as building materials and plastic bottles. In the south, Turkish firms have increased exports of Kyrgyz food products in the last few years.

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¶6. (C) When asked about the possibility of growing Islamic fundamentalism in the south, Ambassador Alpman said that she believed Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and the Islamic Jihad of Uzbekistan are becoming more active there. Although not necessarily violent in its actions, Alpman felt that HT operated more like a "public relations" organization, inciting hatred and purveying extremist Islamic ideology in support of the rest of the extremist community.

¶7. (C) Alpman said she supported the initiative of the Chinese Ambassador, as dean of the diplomatic corps, to organize more activities and briefings for the entire diplomatic corps in Bishkek. She said she had found past events for the diplomatic corps organized in cooperation with the Kyrgyz Ministry of Foreign Affairs to be useful.
GFOELLER